

“Do not look back.” When we were living in Mesopotamia, in the civilizations of Babylon and Assyria, the Creator came to me and said, **“Abraham, come out of your country, out of your family, and out of your father’s house.”** The Creator promised to give me a new family. He promised to be my provider and protector—he would **curse** anyone who cursed me and **bless** anyone who blessed me. I listened and took my wife Sarah and my nephew Lot with me to follow the Creator in faith into the wilderness.

But then a famine struck the new land the Creator had brought us into. My faith wavered. I began to **“look back.”** Would the Creator provide for us? I wasn’t certain. So we went down to Egypt for food. But Egypt was a dangerous place. Would the Creator protect us? My wife Sarah was very beautiful and I was afraid they would kill me and take her for their own. So I lied and said my wife was my sister to try and save my own life. Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, thought Sarah was very beautiful and gave me great wealth as a bride-price for her. The Creator, who had promised to have my back, sent a plague upon Pharaoh’s house. Pharaoh was furious to learn that I had lied—he threw us out of Egypt.

So we left Egypt with incredible **wealth**. But I quickly learned that wealth was a **curse**. In our wealth, the land could no longer support us and all our animals. So my nephew Lot and I had to separate from each other. Trying to learn from my failures, I decided to humble myself and let Lot choose what land to settle in—I would trust the Creator to provide for me no matter what land I was left in. Lot lifted himself up and chose the best land for himself—he settled in Sodom, which was fertile like a paradise. But then Sodom in its pursuit of wealth and power, went to war against the kings of Babylon. Sodom lost the war and my nephew Lot was captured. Again, I began to **“look back.”** Would the Creator protect Lot, would he be able to save him from the kings of Babylon? In my **anxiety** for my nephew, I stopped living by faith and took things into my own hands. I grabbed 318 men and attacked the camp where Lot was being held, using **violence** to rescue him. But then a priest of the Creator named Melchizedek met me and reminded me that the Creator was there to provide for me and protect me. I was convicted and humbled—I had failed to live by faith. So I repented again and worked to change my ways. I gave a portion of my wealth to Melchizedek and then refused to take anything from the king of Sodom who wanted to reward me for my violence. I did not want wealth anymore, it was a curse that had ruined my life and driven me away from faith.

But then the years began to go by and the Creator’s promise of a new family hadn’t come. And again, I began to **“look back.”** It had been ten years since the Creator had first promised to give me offspring as numerous as the sand of the sea and the stars of the sky. And yet Sarah and I had no children of our own. We began wondering if we needed to do something to make the Creator’s promise come true. It had been ten years, was the Creator able to make this happen on his own, did he need **our** help? So I took Sarah’s servant, Hagar, and had a son named Ischmael with her. The Creator was not happy. The Creator went **silent** on me and I did not hear from him for 13 more years.

Then, 24 years after the Creator had first appeared to me, three **strangers** came to our tent. Old and humbled, I welcomed them in and treated them like kings. And I am glad I did, for the Creator was appearing to me in the form of these strangers. They told me that Sarah would get pregnant and give birth to a son and that we must name him Isaac. And again, I began to **“look back.”** Both Sarah and I laughed at the thought of her getting pregnant. I was about to turn 100 years old and Sarah, 90 years old, had long ago stopped her womanly cycles. How could this even be **possible**?

Then the three strangers said that the Creator was going to **destroy** Sodom, for the city was filled with injustice and oppression of the poor. Lot was still living there and I was terrified for him. So I begged the Creator to not destroy Sodom if he found even **ten** righteous people within it. The Creator promised that he would not. But there were **not** even ten righteous people in Sodom. When the three strangers came to Sodom, Lot was **hospitable** to them and took them into his care. However, the people of Sodom were not hospitable and they tried to take advantage of the three strangers. Lot intervened on behalf of the strangers, willingly sacrificing **himself** and even his **family** to protect these strangers. So the Creator intervened and saved Lot and his family, blinding the men of Sodom to keep them from hurting Lot’s family. Then the Creator honored Lot’s hospitality for the stranger and led his family by the hand out of Sodom. The Creator urged them on the journey, **“Do not look back.”** But Lot’s wife didn’t listen. She turned back and lost her life, she was turned into a pillar of salt as fire rained down from heaven and wiped the city of Sodom off the face of the earth.

“Do not look back.” Lot’s wife was a warning—a warning for all of us. It haunted me to the depths of my being. I had been very guilty of **“looking back”** many times on my journey with the Creator. I had **“looked back”** to Egypt. I had **“looked back”** to wealth and power. I had **“looked back”** to myself and my own will and devices. It was only because of the Creator’s **patience** that I had not been completely lost like Lot’s wife. The Creator was **faithful** despite my unfaithfulness. The Creator kept his **promises** even though I had not kept mine. Lot’s wife was a warning. I needed to stay the course, I needed to keep my eyes forward on the Creator and where he was leading me. I needed to trust that he would **provide** for me and **protect** me. I needed to trust that no matter how long it took him to fulfill his promises that the Creator would follow through and be faithful.

“Do not look back.” The Creator calls us to follow him—to leave our **“country”** and **“family”** behind to live in his Kingdom. He promises to provide for us and protect us. But we must trust him. We need to have faith that he can fulfill his promises. Our faith must look to him alone. If we **“look back”** to what we are leaving behind, we will be lost, like Lot’s wife.

In what ways are you **“looking back”** after being called to follow Jesus and him alone? Are you **“looking back”** at America to take care of you? Are you **“looking back”** at wealth and power to solve your problems in life? Are you **“looking back”** at your self, your family, and your desires for how life should go? If we **“look back”** we will eventually be destroyed like Lot’s wife. It is only through the Creator’s grace and **patience** that we have not already been lost like her.

“Do not look back.” Look forward and keep your eyes focused on the Lord Jesus who has called you to follow him. Seek only the Creator’s Kingdom. Do not be distracted by this country and your family and all that you are leaving behind. Trust the Creator to curse those who curse you and bless those who bless you. Just **follow** him. He will **provide** for you, he will **protect** you. What you are leaving behind will be destroyed and wiped off the face of the earth forever. **“Do not look back.” Amen.**